



Aruba's ONLY English newspaper

Schools are using surveillance tech to catch students vaping, snaring some with harsh punishments

By JACQUELINE MUNIS and ELLA McCARTHY

When Aaliyah Iglesias was caught vaping at a Texas high school, she didn't realize how much could be taken from her.

Suddenly, the rest of her high school experience was threatened: being student council president, her role as debate team captain and walking at graduation. Even her college scholarships were at risk. She was sent to the district's alternative school for 30 days and told she could have faced criminal charges.

Like thousands of other students around the country, she was caught by surveillance equipment that schools have installed to crack down on electronic cigarettes, often without informing students. Schools nationwide have invested millions of dollars in the monitoring technology, including federal COVID-19 emergency relief money meant to help schools through the pandemic and aid students' academic recovery. Marketing materials have noted the sensors, at a cost of over \$1,000 each, could help fight the virus by checking air quality.



In this April 10, 2018 file photo, a high school principal displays vaping devices that were confiscated from students in such places as restrooms or hallways at the school in Massachusetts.

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LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

SUNDAY: MARRYBELL MADURO SINGER 6:30 - 8:30pm	MONDAY: ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm	TUESDAY: JEAN PAUL SAXOPHONIST 6:30 - 8:30pm	WEDNESDAY: EDDIE KROON SINGER 4:00 - 6:00pm MAILLEYN ALVARADO VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm KARAOKE 9:00 - 11:00pm	THURSDAY: MARRYBELL MADURO SINGER 6:30 - 8:30pm Happy Hour 12-1 / 4-6 / 9-10	FRIDAY: RICKY THOMAS GUITARIST 7:00 - 9:00pm PREMIUM BRANDS	SATURDAY: EDDIE KROON SINGER 4:00 - 6:00pm ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm
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Schools are using surveillance tech to catch students vaping, snaring some with harsh punishments

Continued from Front

E-cigarettes have inundated middle and high schools. The devices can dispense vapor containing higher concentrations of nicotine than tobacco cigarettes. Millions of minors report vaping despite efforts to limit sales to kids by raising the legal age to 21 and ban flavored products preferred by teenagers.

Some districts pair the sensors with surveillance cameras. When activated by a vaping sensor, those cameras can capture every student leaving the bathroom.

It can surprise students that schools even have such technology. Iglesias, who graduated in May from Tyler High School in Tyler, Texas, first learned it had sensors after an administrator came into a restroom as students started vaping. "I was in awe," Iglesias said. The administrator tried to figure out who was involved but ultimately let all the students go. The episode that got her in trouble happened elsewhere in Texas, at Athens High School, where her debate team was competing last February. Iglesias went into a bathroom to vape. Later that day, her coach told her she had been caught.

"I decided to partake in something that I'm not proud of, but I did it," Iglesias said, adding that her senior year was a stressful time and a close relative of hers was about to come out of jail. "I had had a lot of personal stuff building up outside."

She immediately was pulled from the debate tournament and her coach told her she could face charges because she was 18. She was sent to her district's alternative school for 30 days, which was the minimum punishment for students caught vaping under Tyler schools' zero-tolerance policy. Students found vaping also can receive a misdemeanor citation and be fined up to \$100. Students found with vapes containing THC, the chemical that makes marijuana users feel high, can be arrested on felony charges. At least 90 students in Tyler have faced misdemeanor or felony charges.



In this April 23, 2014 file photo, a man smokes an electronic cigarette in Chicago.

Associated Press

The Tyler district declined to comment on the disciplinary actions, saying in a written statement that tracking of vape usage addresses a problem that is hurting children's health.

"The vape detectors have been efficient in detecting when students are vaping, allowing us to address the issue immediately," the school system said.

A leading provider, HALO Smart Sensors, sells 90% to 95% of its sensors to schools. The sensors don't have cameras or record audio but can detect increases in noise in a school bathroom and send a text alert to school officials, said Rick Cadiz, vice president of sales and marketing for IPVideo, the maker of the HALO sensors.

The sensors are marketed primarily for detecting vape smoke or THC but also can monitor for sounds such as gunshots or keywords indicating possible bullying.

"What we're seeing with the districts is they're stopping the vaping in the schools with this, but then we don't want a \$1,000 paperweight that the school invests for no

other uses, right?" Cadiz said. "We want it to be a long-term investment."

During the pandemic, HALO noted on its website that monitoring indoor air quality was an approved use for federal COVID relief money.

"With the HALO Smart Sensor, you can combat COVID-19 in your schools and create a safe work and learning environment, while also reaping the benefits of vape detection, security monitoring, and more," the company said.

Schools now also can use some of the nearly \$440 million Juul Labs is paying to settle a lawsuit claiming it marketed its products to youth, Cadiz said. The company is aware of privacy concerns around the sensors, Cadiz said.

"All it's doing is alerting that something's going on," he said. "You need someone to physically investigate the alert that comes out."

The sensors do not always work as administrators hope. At San Dieguito Union High School District in California, the vape smoke was so thick in bathrooms some students found it unbearable. In a pilot program, the district installed

vape sensors in bathrooms and cameras outside the doors. "In a way it was too successful," said Michael Allman, a district board member who explained the sensors went off so frequently that administrators felt it was useless to review security footage each time. On social media, students around the country describe ways to outsmart the sensors. Some report covering them in plastic wrap. Others say they blow the smoke into their clothes.

At the Coppell Independent School District in Texas, sensors are part of a prevention strategy that includes educational videos and a tip line. Students can receive \$50 for reporting vaping by peers and "they were turning each other in right and left," said Jennifer Villines, the district's director of student and staff services. Students can be sent to an alternative school or serve in-school suspensions but are not expelled for vaping, she said. "We want our kids here. If they're not here, they're not learning," Villines said. "We also feel like in some cases, behaviors such as these are coping mechanisms, and we

want to keep them in our environment where they learn to self-regulate."

The consequences for Iglesias included having to step down as student council president and debate captain and leaving the National Honor Society. At the alternative school where she spent a month, students do regular coursework but do not attend classes and are not guaranteed to have the materials included in their normal classes.

Iglesias was still able to attend prom, walk at graduation and stay in most of her clubs. She also kept her college scholarship and now attends Tyler Junior College.

For her, the punishments for vaping have gone too far. "The people that make these policies and implement these things sit in a room and do not walk the campuses or see the results, the consequences to these policies that they're making to actually ensure that it's working, because it's not," Iglesias said. "I'm never going to do something like that again, because the repercussions I faced were horrible." □

Jury says Donald Trump must pay an additional \$83.3M to E. Jean Carroll in defamation case

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ, LARRY NEUMEISTER and JENNIFER PELTZ

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A jury has awarded a huge \$83.3 million in additional damages to advice columnist E. Jean Carroll, who says former President Donald Trump damaged her reputation by calling her a liar after she accused him of sexual assault.

The verdict was delivered Friday by a seven-man, two-woman jury in a trial regularly attended by Trump, who abruptly left the courtroom during closing arguments by Carroll's lawyer, only to later return. Carroll smiled as the verdict was read. By then, Trump had left the building in his motorcade.

"Absolutely ridiculous!" he said in a statement shortly after the verdict was announced. He vowed an appeal. "Our Legal System is out of control, and being used as a Political Weapon."

It was the second time in nine months that a jury returned a verdict related to Carroll's claim that a flirtatious, chance encounter with Trump in 1996 at a Bergdorf Goodman store ended violently. She said Trump slammed her against



E. Jean Carroll arrives at Federal Court, Thursday, Jan. 25, 2024, in New York.

Associated Press

a dressing room wall, pulled down her tights and forced himself on her.

In May, a different jury awarded Carroll \$5 million. It found Trump not liable for rape, but responsible for sexually abusing Carroll and then defaming her by claiming she made it up. He is appealing that award.

Trump skipped the first trial. He later expressed regret for not attending and insisted on testifying in the second trial, though the judge limited what he could say, ruling he had missed his

chance to argue that he was innocent. He spent only a few minutes on the witness stand Thursday, during which he denied attacking Carroll, then left court grumbling "this is not America."

This new jury was only asked how much Trump, 77, should pay Carroll, 80, for two statements he made as president when he answered reporters' questions after excerpts of Carroll's memoir were published in a magazine — damages that couldn't be decided earlier

because of legal appeals. Jurors were not asked to redecide the issue of whether the sex attack actually happened.

Her lawyer, Roberta Kaplan, urged jurors in her closing argument Friday to punish Trump enough that he would stop a steady stream of public statements smearing Carroll as a liar and a "whack job." Trump shook his head vigorously as Kaplan spoke, then suddenly stood and walked out, taking Secret Service agents with him.

His exit came only minutes after the judge, without the jury present, threatened to send Trump attorney Alina Habba to jail for continuing to talk when he told her she was finished.

"You are on the verge of spending some time in the lockup. Now sit down," the judge told Habba, who immediately complied.

The trial reached its conclusion as Trump marches toward winning the Republican presidential nomination a third consecutive time.

He has sought to turn his various trials and legal vulnerabilities into an advantage, portraying them as evidence of a weaponized political system.

Though there's no evidence that President Joe Biden or anyone in the White House has influenced any of the legal cases against him, Trump's line of argument has resonated with his most loyal supporters who view the proceedings with skepticism.

Carroll testified early in the trial that Trump's public statements had led to death threats.

"He shattered my reputation," she said. "I am here to get my reputation back and to stop him from telling lies about me." □

Underground fire and power outage in downtown Baltimore snarls commute and closes courthouses

BALTIMORE (AP) — An underground fire and an hourlong power outage in downtown Baltimore snarled Friday morning's commute and closed the city's two courthouses.

Firefighters called to North Charles Street on Thursday night for a report of an underground fire and a possible explosion found fire coming from one manhole cover, according to a news release from the Baltimore Office of Emergency Management.

The fire affected underground electrical conduits along North Charles Street

and power was shut down in the area to assist in extinguishing the fire, officials said. Firefighters used water and dry chemical extinguisher to extinguish the visible fire.

Sara Hennessey told The Baltimore Sun she was working as a server at Mick O'Shea's nearby when she heard the explosion.

"First, I heard a loud bang. I looked outside and saw what I thought was fog," she said. "The firefighters showed up to the restaurant and had us leave through the back door. I thought it was a truck go-

ing over something on the first bang. There were two bangs."

Several city buildings were affected by the outage, with essential buildings running on emergency power. The Mitchell and Cummings courthouses were closed Friday because of the outage.

Light rail service through downtown was suspended for a time, but resumed Friday morning and city transportation officials urged people to avoid the area. Power was restored to the downtown area by 7:30 a.m., but 16 buildings were



Jan. 26, 2024: An open manhole is seen on Friday, Jan. 26, 2024, along Charles Street following an underground fire late Thursday night.

Associated Press

still without power, the city's chief administrative officer

posted on social media.

Taylor Drift or Beyonsleigh? Voting open to name Minnesota snowplows

By **SCOTT McFETRIDGE**
Associated Press

Snowplows are essential to enduring winter in Minnesota, so maybe it's not surprising that every year thousands of people vote on names for the giant machines that clear the state's roads, such as Plowy McPlowFace and Darth Blader.

The often-icy state began naming its 800 plows in 2020 and is expected to announce winners of its 2023-2024 Name a Snowplow contest early next week, adding eight selections to more than three dozen names that already grace trucks scraping snow off Minnesota highways.

This year's 49 finalists one name was discarded after MnDOT realized it had been selected previously include Beyonsleigh, Taylor Drift and Aaron Brrrr, Sir. Voting continues through Sunday, and people don't need to be Minnesota residents to weigh in.

"We definitely know snow in Minnesota, and anyone who lives up here knows the challenges of those conditions and the challenges of trying to keep roads safe for folks to travel during the winter," said Anne Meyer, a spokesperson for the Minnesota Department of Transportation, which hosts the contest.

The agency knew officials



This image provided by the Minnesota Department of Transportation shows No More Mr. Ice Guy in Duluth, Minn.

in Scotland had named snowplows for years and decided a similar effort in Minnesota might draw attention to their winter work, Meyer said.

The response in the first year of the contest was overwhelming, with about 24,000 submissions and 122,000 votes cast. Participation has dropped over the years but remains strong, with about 8,000 submissions for the latest contest.

Besides Plowy McPlowFace and Darth Blader, winners over the years include Blizard of Oz, Scoop Dogg

and Han Snolo. Top names often have Minnesota connections. F. Salt Fitzgerald was a nod to St. Paul-born author F. Scott Fitzgerald, while The Truck Formerly Known As Plow recognized musician Prince, who for a time famously declined to be recognized by a spoken name.

The response in Minnesota has prompted states and cities across the country to hold similar contests to name snowplows, from Alaska and California to Ohio and Massachusetts.

New Mexico launched its first name-a-snowplow

contest this winter, drawing more than 1,500 submissions and 23,000 votes to name 12 of the state's 400 plows. Winners included Sleetwood Mac, Mr. Snow it All and Billy the Skid, acknowledging the New Mexico roots of the gunslinger Billy the Kid.

"There's a natural infatuation with (snowplows)," said Kristine Bustos-Mihelcic, a spokesperson for the New Mexico Department of Transportation. "They're big, huge trucks. They look great on the road, and they are such a visual statement to the core of DOT, which is

helping people get to their destination safely."

Lincoln, Nebraska, also held its first snowplow-naming contest this year. More than 2,300 people voted to name eight city plows, with Clearopathra taking honors as the top selection.

"We hope this helps develop a closer relationship with people, and we can show them that we are human, too," said Erika Hill, a spokesperson for Lincoln's Transportation and Utilities department. "We're laughing along with them about some of these great names."

Plowy McPlowFace is a favorite in many of the contests, in part because it harkens back to a rejected online vote in 2016 to name a British polar research vessel Boaty McBoatface. Although that choice garnered more than three times the votes of its closest competitor, officials opted to name the ship after naturalist Sir David Attenborough.

Minnesota plans to keep its contest going in coming years and Meyer noted each plow keeps its name, which is displayed along the side of the vehicle.

"We've got 800 snowplows statewide for the Minnesota Department of Transportation, so we have a lot of snowplows to name," Meyer said. □

Associated Press



New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo prepares to board a helicopter after announcing his resignation, Aug. 10, 2021, in New York.

Associated Press

By **ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE**
Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — The

U.S. Justice Department reached a settlement with the state of New York on

Justice Department finds Cuomo sexually harassed employees, settles with New York state

Friday to resolve a sexual harassment investigation of former Gov. Andrew Cuomo, confirming allegations from the damaging misconduct probe that led to the Democrat's resignation. The agreement details a series of reforms made after Cuomo left office and outlines additional steps the state will take to change how it handles sexual harassment claims.

Cuomo, once a rising star in the Democratic party, left office in 2021 after a report

by Attorney General Letitia James concluded he sexually harassed at least 11 women. He has denied the allegations and argued James' report was driven by politics, intended to force him from office so she could run for governor.

The Justice Department investigation, which began in 2021, similarly found a pattern of sexual misconduct by Cuomo and said he subjected at least 13 state employees to a sexually hostile work environment. It said

Cuomo's staffers failed to adequately report allegations and retaliated against four women who raised complaints.

"The conduct in the executive chamber under the former governor, the state's most powerful elected official, was especially egregious because of the stark power differential involved and the victims' lack of avenues to report and redress harassment," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke. □

Top U.N. court orders Israel to prevent genocide in Gaza but stops short of ordering cease-fire

By MIKE CORDER and RAF CASERT

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands

(AP) — The United Nations' top court on Friday ordered Israel to do all it can to prevent death, destruction and any acts of genocide in Gaza, but the panel stopped short of ordering Jerusalem to end the military offensive that has laid waste to the Palestinian enclave.

In a ruling that will keep Israel under the legal lens for years to come, the court offered little other comfort to Israeli leaders in a genocide case brought by South Africa that goes to the core of one of the world's most intractable conflicts. The court's half-dozen orders will be difficult to achieve without some sort of cease-fire or pause in the fighting. "The court is acutely aware of the extent of the human tragedy that is unfolding in the region and is deeply concerned about the continuing loss of life and human suffering," court President Joan E. Donoghue said.

The ruling amounted to an overwhelming rebuke of Israel's wartime conduct and added to mounting international pressure to halt the nearly 4-month-old offensive, which has killed more than 26,000 Palestinians, decimated vast swaths of Gaza and driven nearly 85% of its 2.3 million people from their homes.

Allowing the accusations to stand stung the government of Israel, which was founded as a Jewish state after the Nazi slaughter of 6 million Jews during World War II.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the fact that the court was willing to discuss the genocide charges was a "mark of shame that will not be erased for generations." He also vowed to press ahead with the war.

The power of the ruling was magnified by its timing, coming on the eve of International Holocaust Re-



Presiding judge Joan Donoghue opens the session at the International Court of Justice, or World Court, in The Hague, Netherlands, Friday, Jan. 26, 2024.

Associated Press

membrance Day.

"Those truly needing to stand trial are those that murdered and kidnapped children, women and the elderly," former Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz said, referring to Hamas militants who stormed through Israeli communities on Oct. 7 in the attack that set off the war.

The assault killed some 1,200 people and resulted in another 250 being kidnapped.

The court also called on Hamas to release the hostages who are still in captivity. Hamas urged the international community to make Israel carry out the court's orders.

Many of the measures were approved by an overwhelming majority of the judges. Of the six orders, an Israeli judge voted in favor of two an order for humanitarian aid and another for the prevention of inflammatory speech.

Israeli Judge Aharon Barak said he supported those orders in the hope that they would "help to decrease tensions and discourage damaging rhetoric" while

easing the "consequences of the armed conflict for the most vulnerable."

Such provisional measures issued by the world court are legally binding, but it is not clear if Israel will comply with them.

"We will continue to do what is necessary to defend our country and defend our people," said Netanyahu, who pushed back against the ruling in two languages. In a message aimed at his domestic audience, the tone was more defiant in Hebrew, and he stopped short of overtly criticizing the court in English.

The court ruled that Israel must do all it can to prevent genocide, including refraining from killing Palestinians or causing harm to them. It also ruled that Israel urgently needs to get basic aid to Gaza and that the country should punish any incitement to genocide, among other measures.

The panel told Israel to submit a report on measures taken within a month.

"That's a time that the court could come back and say, 'You have not met the or-

ders.

You have not complied. Now we find you are in the midst of committing genocide," said Mary Ellen O'Connell, a professor of law and international peace studies at Notre Dame University's Kroc Institute.

Friday's decision was an interim ruling. It could take years for the court to consider all aspects of South Africa's genocide allegations.

In Israel, commentators said the decision not to order a cease-fire was received with some relief since it helped Israel avoid a collision with a top U.N. body.

Palestinians and their supporters said the court took an important step toward holding Israel accountable. The Foreign Ministry of the internationally backed Palestinian self-rule government in the West Bank said the ruling "should serve as a wake-up call for Israel and actors who enabled its entrenched impunity," in an apparent reference to the United States, Israel's chief ally.

The U.S. repeated its position that Israel must "take all possible steps" to minimize harm to civilians, increase humanitarian aid and curb "dehumanizing rhetoric."

"We continue to believe that allegations of genocide are unfounded," the State Department said in a statement.

The South African government said the ruling determined that "Israel's actions in Gaza are plausibly genocidal."

"There is no credible basis for Israel to continue to claim that its military actions are in full compliance with international law, including the Genocide Convention," the government said in a statement.

Israel often boycotts international tribunals and U.N. investigations, saying they are unfair and biased. But this time, it took the rare step of sending a high-level legal team a sign of how seriously it regards the case. The Health Ministry in the Hamas-run territory does not differentiate between combatants and civilians in its death toll, but the agency has said about two-thirds of those killed have been women and children. The Israeli military claims at least 9,000 of the more than 26,000 dead were Hamas militants.

U.N. officials have expressed fears that even more people could die from disease and malnutrition, with at least one-quarter of the Gaza population facing starvation.

Yuval Shany, a law professor at Hebrew University and senior fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute, said the court's decision was "not as bad as Israel feared it would be" and would not fundamentally alter the way the military conducts the war.

"The greatest fear was that the court would ask Israel to stop the war," Shany said, describing the decision as "something that Israel can live with." □

Kenya's high court rules that deploying nation's police officers to Haiti is unconstitutional

By **TOM ODULA**
Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Kenya's high court on Friday blocked the U.N.-backed deployment of Kenyan police officers to Haiti to help the Caribbean country bring gang violence under control.

Judge Chacha Mwita said Kenya's National Security Council, which is led by the president, does not have the authority to deploy regular police outside the country. Kenya's parliament passed a motion in November allowing the deployment of 1,000 officers to lead a multinational force in Haiti.

"It is not contested that there is no reciprocal arrangement between Kenya and Haiti and for that reason, there can be no deployment of police to that country," Mwita said. The judge said Kenya's offer was noble but needed to be carried out in accordance with the constitution.

Mwita made the ruling in response to an application from Thirdway Alliance Party leader Ekuru Aukot, who argued that the government's plan to send the



Lawyers react as Justice Chacha Mwita delivers judgement on a petition against the deployment of Kenyan forces to Haiti, at Milimani court in the capital Nairobi, Kenya, Friday, Jan. 26, 2024.

officers to Haiti was illegal. Kenyan government spokesperson Isaac Mwaura said it will appeal the decision. The decision was considered by many to be a blow to Haiti, which first requested the immediate deployment of a foreign armed force in October 2022. "This is terrible news for Haitians," said Diego Da

Rin of the International Crisis Group. "The vast majority of the population was waiting for external help to assist the police regain some control of the capital and the areas most affected by violence." Mercy Corps Country Director for Haiti, Laurent Uwumuremyi, supported the High Court's de-

cision saying that previous international peacekeeping missions such as the U.N. mission MINUSTAH that was deployed there 2004-2017 and international interventions have had disastrous consequences for Haiti. "Solutions for Haiti, including those to bolster the Haitian National Police and the army to tamp down

violence and return some semblance of security, should be led by Haitians," Uwumuremyi said.

He said another international intervention might inadvertently worsen the situation, exposing more people to violence.

"It is critical that any intervention is done to restore stability, respects human rights and humanitarian laws, and does not jeopardize or hinder aid operations or worsen the violence," he said.

An unprecedented surge in gang violence is plaguing Haiti, with the number of victims killed, injured and kidnapped more than doubling last year, the U.N. secretary-general's special envoy for the country said Thursday.

"I cannot overstate the severity of the situation in Haiti, where multiple protracted crises have reached a critical point," envoy Maria Isabel Salvador told the U.N. Security Council. She said the 8,400 victims of gang violence documented by her office last year 122% more than in 2022 were mainly targeted by gangs in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince. □

Associated Press

Many Costa Ricans welcome court ruling that they don't have to use their father's surname first

By **JAVIER CÓRDOBA**
Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (AP) — Many Costa Ricans on Friday welcomed a ruling this week by the country's Supreme Court of Justice eliminating the requirement that people use their father's surname before their mother's on identification documents.

In Spanish-speaking nations, people usually go by two last names. In Costa Rica, if a man were named José and his father's surname were Suárez and his mother's Ortiz, by law he would have been registered as José Suárez Ortiz. The court's decision maintains the requirement to use

both names, but allows citizens to choose the order, giving them the freedom to put the mother's first, as in Ortiz Suárez.

On the street in the Costa Rican capital, San Jose, 48-year-old messenger Carlos Barquero said it may be difficult to get over the

custom of putting the father's name first. "But the truth is, it's right to recognize the mothers and women in our society as well," Barquero said. "I don't see any problem with people choosing the order."

The court modified a section of civil code mandating the order of the names, following a request for clarification from the country's elections board after a resident came to the board asking to change the order of their name.

The code was based on "customary practices based on patriarchal and archaic concepts of family, which discriminates against

women and today is incompatible with the law of the Constitution," the court said in a news release.

"Surnames form an inseparable part of the personality of human beings and their order is inherent to the fundamental rights to name and identity," the justices added.

Also in San Jose, librarian Mayra Jiménez, 42, welcomed the ruling.

"I feel that this is a right and an opportunity for people who want, for one reason or another, to change the order of their last names, so that they can be comfortable with their identity," Jiménez told The Associated Press. □



Pedestrians walk past in San Jose, Costa Rica, Saturday, Feb. 3, 2018.

Associated Press

Aruba to me

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Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from our visitor Scott Selby.

He wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is the most relaxing, fun and safest vacation destination we have ever encountered. We will never go anywhere else for our holiday!"



Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing with us and our readers! what Aruba means to you

Another Treasure of Aruba's Beaches: Sea Glass!

NOORD - It is hard to imagine this happening today, but years ago people dumped all kinds of refuse straight into the ocean, including old cars, and their household garbage, which of course included lots of glass. Over the next 30 years the pounding waves cleaned the beach, by breaking down everything but glass and pottery. The pounding waves washed the trash up and down, back and forth. Tons of polished, broken glass pieces were created by the pounding surf. These smoothed, colored glass particles then settled along the sea shore in millions, and that is why you can find these beautiful and colorful pieces on the north shore beaches of Aruba.

Especially on the strip on white sand between the famous Natural Bridge" and the huge red anchor close to "Grapefield" beach you will be able to find your own pieces of sea glass. The sea glass that was created is the product of a very long and interesting process. It can take anywhere from 10 to 30 years to make sea glass. The name for any piece of glass that finds its way to the ocean and tumbles around in the water long enough is "Sea glass."



The colorful pieces of glass are being used for decoration, hand-crafts and jewelry!

Once glass makes its way into the ocean, the glass is broken up into shards and is tumbled around in the water, where sand and other rocks act like sandpaper to smooth out its rough edges. Sometimes as the sea glass is passed through fire, it becomes fire glass, the rarest of sea glass with certain inclusions, just like precious gems.

For years, the water beat against the different kinds of trash being dumped. Glass, household appliances and even motor parts were discarded on the beach. The waves and weather conditions wore down the overwhelm-

ing amount of garbage in the water, creating millions of beautiful smooth rocks.

It's hard to believe the short-sighted mistakes we were making that could have potentially ruined these beautiful beaches. But thanks to natural processes, the ocean transformed the trash into the sea glass. Each colored gem on the beach has its own story.

The ruby red glass stones are typically from old car tail-lights.

Then, the sapphire rocks are the remnants of broken apothecary bottles. The most common and the easiest to find are the brown (Amstel & Polar beer), green (Heineken & Balashi beer) and clear glass which are the soft much loved "soft drink" bottles.

If you like to see the sea glass for yourself, and be in awe of the power of nature, rent a car or jeep and go explore our deserted



beaches on the north side of the island. Make it a fun family day! Even if we didn't mean to pollute the Beaches how we did, it is inspiring to see just how the earth can correct our mistakes.

Funny, how trash can change into treasures!

Everybody knows that you are not allowed to take local shells home, but the people working at the airport have no problem you taking sea glass home. A few of those pieces make great souvenirs. You can place them in a wine glass or large bottle for decoration and every time you look at it a smile will light up your face thinking back of your unforgettable Aruba vacation! □



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THE SHOPS AT ALHAMBRA CASINO

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Weather forecast
 Valid until Saturday, January 27 2024, 18:00 hours

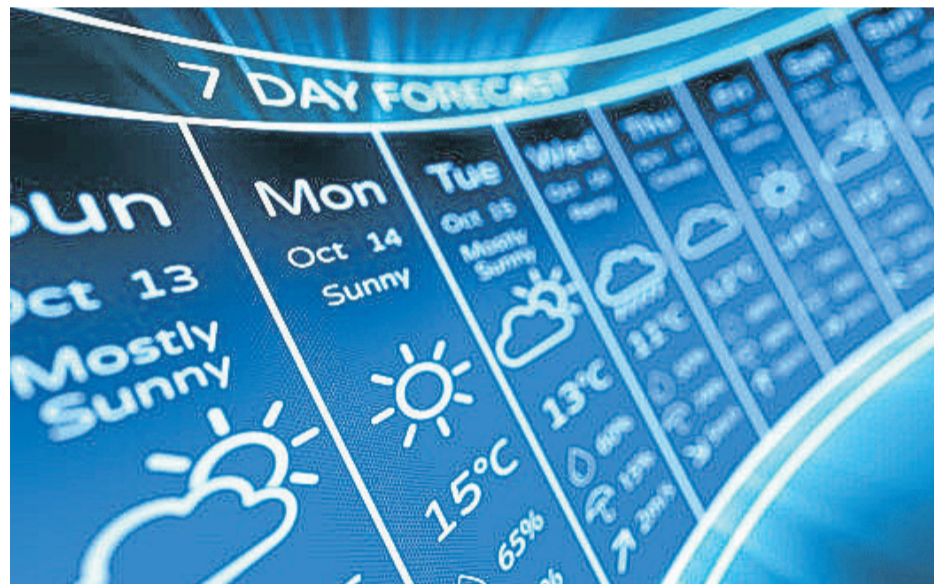
An alert for strong winds is in effect until 6 am Saturday. A small craft advisory, especially for the east to northwest coastal region remains in effect.
Weather: This evening: partly cloudy and

generally dry during the overnight, early morning and tomorrow: Partly cloudy with a passing to brief shower

in gusts; Force 6 to 7 (40 to 61 km/hr, 22 to 33 knots).

Synopsis for the next 24 hours:

The strong pressure gradient in the Caribbean, will relax during the upcoming weekend allowing the wind also to relax a bit. Otherwise, patches of clouds moving with the wind to the local region will induce a passing to brief shower during the day.



Maximum temperature 32 centigrades
 Minimum temperature 26 centigrades
 Heat index during and around the afternoon
 Hours: 33 to 38 degrees Celsius
 UV index: 8

Sunset : 6:39 pm
 Sunrise: 7:06 am.

Wind:
 From generally east directions and moderate to fresh; force 4 to 5 (20 to 39 km/hr, 11 to 21 knots). During daytime strong to near gale force

Marine conditions/state of the sea:
 On the protected sites: smooth: around 1 foot.
 On the south sections: moderate at 2 to 4 feet.
 On the east to northwest coastlines: Generally moderate to locally quite rough at 5 to 7 feet.

Visit the island's hidden natural pools

(Oranjestad)—Amongst the countless beaches surrounding the island that are well-known and frequently visited, there are an additional two "hidden" natural pools that are situated in the northern coast of the island, two ideal stops in your tour itinerary.

Conchi (Natural Pool)
 For many years, Conchi was the only natural pool that we had on the island. Located in the Arikok National Park, near Boca Keto and the Daimari Ranch, Conchi—also known "Cura di Turtuga (Turtle's Cove) or just Natural Pool—is reachable with any 4x4 vehicle or by foot if you're up for a long hike. However, since it is part of the National Park, you must first get permission from park

management to enter. You would have to purchase a day pass, and receive a wristband as proof of payment. Once you've completed that, you are set!

If you decide to hike from the entrance of the Arikok National Park, this is also possible: do bring plenty of protective clothing and enough water and food—it could take you up to three hours to hike there!

However, when you eventually do get there, you will be greeted with crystal blue water surrounded by a natural rock formation that protects you from the wild waves on the other side. Though the pool is located on the northern side of the island (where

the sea is largely rough and largely no suitable for swimming), the pool itself is very calm. It's also relatively deep, and you can climb up the rocks and jump in!

Cave Pool
 This relatively new pool appeared just a few years ago, when a part of the dried up coral floor broke off and created a partition between the ocean and what is now the natural pool that is hidden there. Because it's still so new, there is no official name for it, but most people just call it the cave pool.

Just like the Conchi, the new natural pool is situated on the northern coast of Aruba. However, this pool is much easier to reach with any type



of vehicle, and there is no hiking needed. This spot has also become a regular stop for touring visitors.

When you get there, maybe you won't be able to spot the pool immediately, because you will probably notice the moon-shaped lagoon where wild northern waves crash into each other. Sounds scary, but if you look down on your right, you'll see a calm, crystal blue

little pool in the corner. To get there, you have to climb down some stairs. Be careful when climbing down and follow the instructions of your tour guide if you have one.

And just like Conchi, this pool also has a jumping spot, and a rope to climb back up the boulder. □

Picture of cave pool is credited to RockaBeach Tours

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Exploring the Mainstreet of San Nicolas



SAN NICOLAS— At Just 11 miles southeast from Oranjestad you will enter the city San Nicolas, also known as Sunrise City or Chocolate City. A city that is rich in authentic culture and island charm. San Nicolas is Aruba's second largest city and was once a bustling company town dominated by the oil industry since the early 1930's.

Over the course of four decades, its demographics had changed immensely due to a stream of Afro-Caribbean and South American workers who came to fill the jobs in the oil refinery between the 1920's until the 1960's. To this day traces of the multicultural influences in culinary offerings and customs, housing and population are clearly visible in San Nicolas - more than anywhere else on the island.

Flow of history

if you are looking for history San Nicolas has it. Here you will find three amazing museums, The Museum of Industry, the Community Museum and the Carnival Euphoria, all within walking distance from one another.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history which began in the 19th century. Here you will learn about gold, aloe, phosphate,

oil and the tourism industries which made San Nicolas once a bustling business center. Experience the touching stories of those who were part of this history.

Nicolaas Store built in 1940 and renovated in 2014 is the home of the Community Museum. The collection is remarkable and spans millennia. Ancient fossils stand next to tableaus of an authentically recreated colonial kitchen and bedroom and 19th-century barbershop, just to name a few of the items of old-time Aruba that has been preserved. A collection of artifacts and other objects of artistic, cultural, historical, or scientific importance can be found here for the purpose of education or enjoyment.

Carnival Euphoria is showcasing Aruba's Carnival. See how are Carnival has developed over the past 65 years.

The new San Nicolas

In the shadow of the refinery, an art capital is quietly beginning to grow. This is the new San Nicolas, a place that is starting to become a magnet for all that is young, cool and hip in Aruba. Indeed, San Nicolas has all of the ingredients of an emerging cultural hub — varied history, interesting architecture, and, perhaps most importantly, an urban layout that makes it walkable. As you walk around, the streets are

silent but the walls are loud, filled with bright, colorful murals painted by a collection of artists from around the world. Thanks to the efforts of various art organizations in Aruba, such as Art Rules Aruba and Aruba Art Fair, San Nicolas has had quite the aesthetic makeover with regards to vibrant street art. Each year more and more stunning murals are replacing broken down buildings with colorful art pieces that keep brightening up SunriseCity.

Must See, Do, Buy & Eat

A little bit of everything can be found in the main street. Stores selling shoes, clothing, jewelry you name it. Arts & crafts by Cosecha store & Creative Center, a design store in which you can immerse yourself in discovering genuine and locally made arts and crafts which reflect the diversification of the Aruban craft heritage and the artistic supply of artisans. Don't miss out on trying the exquisite food offered by the cafes and restaurants or just enjoy a peaceful walk admiring the murals, mosaic benches and all the history San Nicolas has to offer. □



Ayo & Casibari: Aruba's famous rock formations

(Oranjestad)—The Ayo and Casibari Rock Formations are known locally as one of the crucial sites to have in your “off-road” trip itinerary. These naturally formed rock formations as just one of the few places on the island that hold a rich history of our culture and of our ancestors.



The Casibari Rock Formation

Ayo

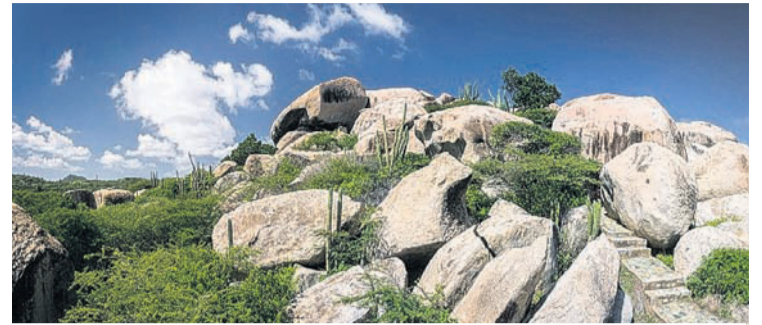
The Ayo Rock Formation is located in the northern part of the island, right on the road that leads you to the Black Stone Beach, and close to the Natural Bridge. The Ayo is a fenced terrain that consists of several giant boulders, resting neatly on top of or side by side each other, adding gorgeous natural architecture to the surrounding “mondi”*. This is also one of the few sites to contain prehistoric markings of our indigenous ancestors. The Ayo Rock formation contains stairs that lead you to the top of the highest boulder, offering a

breath-taking view of the Aruban backyard. The Ayo is usually quiet, as it is situated farther away from the busier parts of the island. However, this is just another charm of the site: the quiet area and the refreshing breeze offer a sense of comfort and peace.

Casibari

Probably the busier rock formation site, the Casibari is situated more in the center of the island, much closer—and more accessible—to the general public. Just like Ayo, Casibari is a fenced area contain-

ing several boulders that lay on top or lean on each other. The best aspect of the Casibari Rock Formation is the accompanying view when you climb up the top of the round, flat bolder. For this position, you can see the majority of the island and the ocean in the south. Right in front of the entrance, there is the Casibari Café and Grill, a great place to get refreshments and snack before continuing your off-road adventure! Both sites are open free to the public, 24 hours a day. However, unless you are



The Ayo Rock Formation



The Ayo Rock Formation

taking a trip with a professional tour guide, there are no guides at the sites to help you climb the rock. So, do be careful when trudging on the boulders, and make sure to befriend

any roaming goats you see along the way! ☐

***Mondi: what we call our Aruban wilderness. We don't have forests, or deserts, but we do have mondi!**

Episode XCVII- 97 - The four elements

According to the ancient Greek concept of the four basic elements of nature these are the different ways in which energy manifests itself. Each and every one of them is our energy centers and defines us much more than we think. Although it is easy to identify them: earth, air, fire and water, when we talk about their meaning, things get a little more complicated. It's important to know the mystical meaning of them because it is the way to get to know the world, to respect it and to be aware of what surrounds us and also what shapes us.

Water is the first of the elements and essential for life. Every living being is made up of water and without it, we could not survive. The water element is directly related to the feminine part that each

individual has, with calm, peace and serenity. Also if we relate this element with the unconscious we will know that water has a lot to do with our hidden desires.

Fire represents all the energy that is in each one of us. There are a large number of symbols related to fire. It is the element that gives

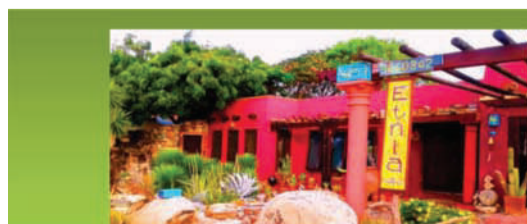
us the possibility of starting over and being reborn. The importance of the fire element lies in the rebirth of our spirit, but also in its majesty and luminosity. Although as an element in itself it allows us to protect ourselves from the cold, it is the element that makes us move towards our true being.



The earth element represents the solid, what we can see and touch what feeds us that what refers to the countryside and agriculture, what feeds us and at the same time represents the purest nature. From the earth we come and to the earth we shall return. It is an element which gives us stability; hence the expression “put your feet on the ground”. The earth gives us the balance that each one of us needs to navigate our destiny. The element air is everywhere, it allows us to live, and to breathe. It is related to the arts, poetry, dance and music. The air gives us true

beauty. This element is energy and the air is related to everything that is behind the material world and everything that we can perceive with our thoughts. We can think of air as the opposite of the material and completely linked to abstract thought.

To get to know more over Aruba's and its origins, its animals and culture, we highly recommend you to book your visit for our renowned cultural encounter session has been entertaining curious participants for decades. Mail us at etnianaativa03@gmail.com to confirm your participation. Our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels. ☐



Article by: Etnia Nativa

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Short history of the beginnings of baseball in Aruba

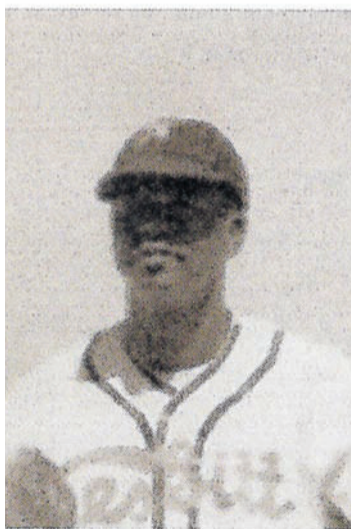
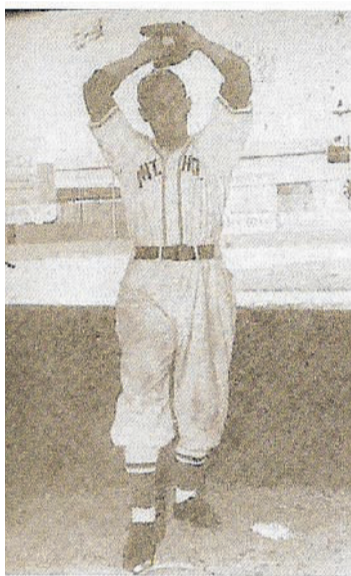
ORANJESTAD — Baseball was played on the island of Aruba in the 1930's, but only by United States expatriates working for LAGO and living inside the LAGO colony. Jim Bluejacket, the legendary US Indian who had played in two major league teams, worked for LAGO during 14 years and was a key factor in the growth of the popularity of the game in the colony. There is no record of Bluejacket ever playing outside the colony.

Outside the colony, the game of baseball was introduced to Aruba by Venezuelan immigrants and sailors on the Venezuelan fishing boats that used Aruba as their home port. They formed pick-up teams and played games on Sundays on an open field behind what is now the Court of Justice. One of the Venezuelans that comes to mind is Felix Garrido, grandfather of our current Prime-Minister.

In the late 30s the leader of this group was Raúl Aparicio, a cousin of Luis Aparicio who is now enshrined in the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. The Aparicios were evidently very good at sports. Raúl had two brothers who also played baseball, René and Roman. Rosendo, his only brother who did not play baseball became a professional soccer player in the Venezuelan league. Rosendo was nicknamed "Cabeza de oro" (golden head) for a memorable header he scored to win a game for his team.

Interestingly, it was in Aruba that Luis Aparicio played his first game outside of Venezuela. This took place in 1950 when he played shortstop for the school he attended. Later he played for "Cabimas" in a doubleheader of the Venezuelan Western League. These official games of the league were authorized to be played in Aruba by the Professional Baseball Organization of Venezuela. Several others who played in those games have also been enshrined.

Luis Aparicio's father was



the super popular Luis "El Grande" (the great one) after whom the baseball stadium in Maracaibo is named. He and his brother owned the professional baseball teams "Gavilanes" which later became the "Aguilas", and the "Cabimas".

In the early '40s, another group, mostly immigrants from the Dominican Republic also became very active with pickup teams. Some of these remained active in baseball well into the early '50s; as umpires, managers even as players. Among these were Nestor "Pantin" Guerrero who also had a musical band. Perhaps not so coincidentally, many of Pantin's players were also musicians. Luthai Pantophlet who umpired many years was a well-known drummer. Gaston Hazel was a bongo player; José Bryson and the brothers Nicholson, Teddy and Julio, all played several instruments.

In San Nicolas, baseball was played on the grounds next to where the LAGO Sport Park (now Laveist Sport Park) was officially inaugurated in March 1941.

During the WWII years, baseball got a big lift from the influx of Puerto Rican and US soldiers stationed here. As LAGO was playing a very important role in the struggle against Hitler, it was able to get all the sports equipment needed here to allow more people to participate.

In the '40s only the Lago Sports Park organized baseball championship games. The first teams to participate were Artraco, (Aruba Trading Co.), Esso Garage and Botica San Lucas. In 1945 Venezuelan employees of the Lago refinery participated under the name of "Cafenol", a very popular Venezuelan coffee brand. Two other groups of Venezuelan immigrants formed the teams "Cerveceria" (named after the iconic team Cerveceria Caracas), and "Venezuela", although not all members of these teams were Venezuelans. This was also the year that the team



sponsored by Roxy Café started to play as "Dodgers". Dodgers became the dominant baseball powerhouse till the 1950s.

Other teams that entered the baseball scene in the late 1940s: Pepsi Cola (Oranjestad) and St. Thomas Boys (former students of St. Thomas College, Oranjestad). "Baby Ruth" in San Nicolas played initially under the name "Camel" and "Barnes' Ramblers" the only team consisting of Lago Colony players to participate in the Lago Sport Park championships. "Red Rock Cola" was formed in Oranjestad in 1950.

In 1952 the team Pepsi Cola became "Nesbitt's" and had players of seven countries, including two American expats from Lago Colony.

In 1950 a group of prominent members of the Aruba community founded the Amateur Baseball Bond of Aruba (ABBA) to give structure to the management of the sport and became the organizers of official championship games. While maintaining the existing teams in a league that was referred to as A-class, ABBA established a B-class league in which the "Budweiser" and "Braves" played the first years.

By 1952 Aruba became a member of the International Amateur Baseball Association and fielded a team managed by Joe Proterra, (former pitcher of "Barnes' Ramblers"), that would play for the first time ever in the Amateur Baseball World Se-

ries that took place in Havana, Cuba in September. Surprisingly, Aruba won two of its six games and became the darling of the Havana fans. Nell Harms of the Aruban team was named the "Outstanding player of the week" for his performance against Honduras. He allowed just two hits, struck out 15 and hit the only homerun of the game. Joe Cambria, the famous scout for the Washington Senators offered him a contract, but Nel was not interested, but the next year, at the Amateur Baseball World Series in Caracas, Venezuela, Nel and Ruben Phillips did sign and in 1954 they played professional baseball the Georgia-Florida League and the Texas-New Mexico League. They were the first Arubans to play professionally, but not the only ones.

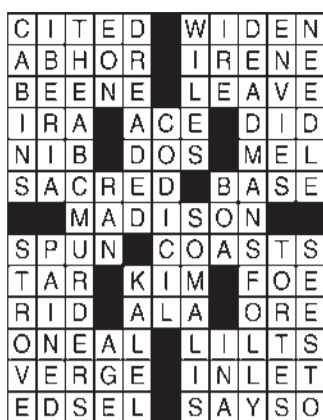
During the games in Havana, contacts were made with the organizers of Little League Baseball in Cuba which eventually resulted in the introduction of Little League in Aruba. Little League of Aruba has been extremely successful: It has produced many players who earned baseball scholarships at universities in the United States, a few who played professionally in the Netherlands and different countries in the Caribbean and five who reached the major leagues: Calvin Maduro, Eugene Kingsale, Radhames Dijkhoff, Sydney Ponson, and Xander Bogaerts one of the brightest stars of Boston Red Sox. □

Written by Mr. Clyde Harms

CROSSWORD

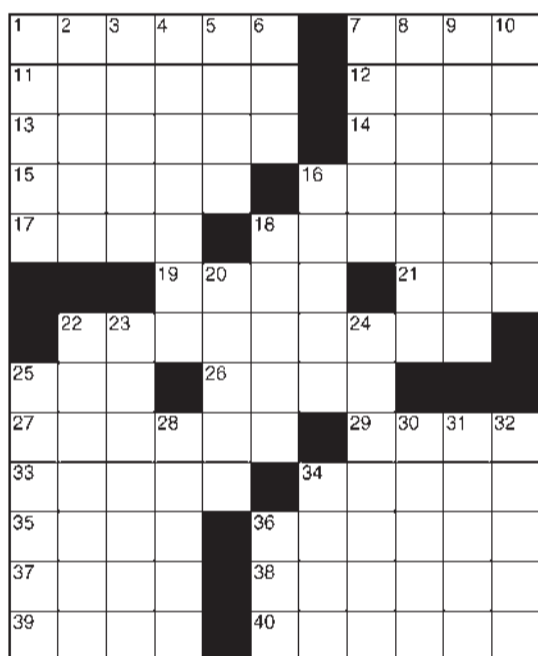
By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 37 Viral
 - 1 One of the concept Earps
 - 7 Memo letters
 - 11 Each
 - 12 Composer Bartók
 - 13 Did lab work
 - 14 Feedback fill
 - 15 Ship staffs
 - 16 Sound of Washington
 - 17 Tortoise's rival
 - 18 Time to come
 - 19 Vietnam neighbor
 - 21 Was ahead
 - 22 Headstrong type
 - 25 Tentative taste
 - 26 Year parts
 - 27 Canine coat
 - 29 Serving aid
 - 33 Sub system
 - 34 Run down
 - 35 Opposite of sans
 - 36 Thin layer
- DOWN**
- 1 Fire starter
 - 2 Verdi creation
 - 3 Stair part
 - 4 Sentiment for an ailing friend
 - 5 Good pair
 - 6 Homer's neighbor
 - 7 In the area
 - 8 Shore flier
 - 9 Changed
 - 10 Stuck
 - 16 Assertive
 - 18 Convergence-based
 - 20 Venomous snake
 - 22 Persuade
 - 23 Beach in a 1964 song
 - 24 Panama, for one
 - 25 Tahini base
 - 28 Spiked clubs
 - 30 Bring up
 - 31 Ed of "Up"
 - 32 Baker's need
 - 34 Arrived
 - 36 Young buck



Yesterday's answer

- 8 Shore flier
- 9 Changed
- 10 Stuck
- 16 Assertive
- 18 Convergence-based
- 20 Venomous snake
- 22 Persuade
- 23 Beach in a 1964 song
- 24 Panama, for one
- 25 Tahini base
- 28 Spiked clubs
- 30 Bring up
- 31 Ed of "Up"
- 32 Baker's need
- 34 Arrived
- 36 Young buck



1-27

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-27 CRYPTOQUOTE

A Z Y G Z L Q W V C Q H Z B J L W S R
C J Y S E K E R Y S E R M W P E S W V
O M Z W Y R V S , M R Z V S N J M J L R F .
Z Y F W M W U R S E R H R R M W Y P
J H X R P W Y Y W Y P V . — Z Y Y R
S L G W S S

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: GRATITUDE IS NOT ONLY THE GREATEST OF VIRTUES, BUT THE PARENT OF ALL THE OTHERS. — CICERO

Not all bitcoin ETFs are the same. Here are some questions to consider before buying any

NEW YORK (AP) — Now that bitcoin funds are trading, which is the best to own?

The answer is not necessarily the one that rises the most. The job of these funds is to track the price of bitcoin, whatever that is, in what can be a more convenient thing to own for many investors.

So if bitcoin is falling, for example, a bitcoin fund that's rising in price may not be doing what an investor is looking for.

The first question an investor needs to ask before buying one of the bitcoin funds is if they actually want to own bitcoin. The cryptocurrency has been around a decade and a half, but much of professional Wall Street still sees it as too risky and speculative to own.

It has a history of drastic swings in price, which can come suddenly and happen over the weekend or overnight in its 24/7 trading. Its daily average volatility is roughly three and a half times that of the global stock market, according to John Laforge, head of real asset strategy at Wells Fargo Investment Institute.

"Highlighted a different way, bitcoin's price return in 2022 was -64%," he said, "while its 2023 return was 157%." But bitcoin also holds the allure of possibly moving in ways that other investments aren't. Investors are always looking for what's called an "uncorrelated asset" whose price might zig when everything else they own is zagging. Such independent movements can make an overall portfolio less volatile.



An advertisement for the cryptocurrency Bitcoin displayed on a tram, May 12, 2021, in Hong Kong.

Associated Press

Another question investors must answer is how they want to buy bitcoin. The main way until now has been to buy it directly and then to either hold it in what's called a wallet or leave it on an exchange. Now, following the approval earlier this month by U.S. regulators, investors can buy several exchange-traded funds that will take responsibility for holding actual bitcoin and protecting it. Earlier, bitcoin-related ETFs invested in contracts related to bets on prices for bitcoin in the future, but not on the cryptocurrency itself.

Already, there's been some separation in performance among the bitcoin ETFs that have begun trading. Between Jan. 11 and Tuesday, the Grayscale Bitcoin Trust (GBTC) sank 14.3%, for example. That's milder than the 16.3% drop for the Valkyrie Bitcoin fund (BRRR) over the same time. So, what should investors be looking at? Here's a look at several differences:

FEES

When many ETFs are try-

ing to do the same thing, such as follow the market price of bitcoin, one of the easiest ways they can distinguish themselves is by charging lower fees.

Expenses are a drag on any investment, and higher fees take more of an investor's returns away from them. In traditional stock ETFs, fees have plummeted all the way to zero in some cases as expense-conscious investors steer their dollars toward the lowest-cost options.

ETFs will advertise their "expense ratios," which show how much of a fund's assets goes toward covering its expenses. Tiny differences in fees may not add up to all that much, even over the course of years, but why pay for something if you don't have to? Keep in mind, ETF companies can change their expense ratios, up or down. Fidelity is one of the providers offering a temporary expense ratio of zero on its bitcoin ETF, for example. It will rise to 0.25% in August.

TRADING VOLUMES AND ASSETS
ETFs that attract lots of investment and that trade often can make it easier for investors. Funds that trade more actively can mean a narrower gap between what's called the "bid" price, or what investors are trying to buy a share of the ETF at, and the "ask" price, which is what prospective sellers are hoping to get. □

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A U.S. scientist has brewed up a storm by offering Britain advice on making tea

By JILL LAWLESS
Associated Press
LONDON (AP) — An American scientist has sparked a trans-Atlantic tempest in a teapot by offering Britain advice on its favorite hot beverage.

Bryn Mawr College chemistry professor Michelle Franci says one of the keys to a perfect cup of tea is a pinch of salt. The tip is included in Franci's book "Steeped: The Chemistry of Tea," published Wednesday by the Royal Society of Chemistry.

Not since the Boston Tea Party has mixing tea with salt water roiled the Anglo-American relationship so much.

The salt suggestion drew howls of outrage from tea lovers in Britain, where popular stereotype sees Americans as coffee-swilling boozers who make tea, if at all, in the microwave.

"Don't even say the word 'salt' to us..." the etiquette guide Debrett's wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.

The U.S. Embassy in London intervened in the brewing storm with a social media post reassuring "the good people of the U.K. that the unthinkable notion of adding salt to Britain's national drink is not official United States policy."



A cup of black tea with a spoon and tea leaves in London, on Aug. 29, 2022.

Associated Press

"Let us unite in our steeped solidarity and show the world that when it comes to tea, we stand as one," said the tongue-in-cheek post. "The U.S. Embassy will continue to make tea in the proper way - by microwaving it."

The embassy later clarified that its statement was "a lighthearted play on our shared cultural connections" rather than an official press release.

"Steeped," in contrast, is no joke. The product of three years' research and experimentation, the book explores the more than 100 chemical compounds found in tea and "puts the chemistry to use with ad-

vice on how to brew a better cup," its publisher says. Franci said adding a small amount of salt not enough to taste makes tea seem less bitter because "the sodium ions in salt block the bitter receptors in our

mouths."

She also advocates making tea in a pre-warmed pot, agitating the bag briefly but vigorously and serving in a short, stout mug to preserve the heat. And she says milk should be added to the cup after the tea, not before another issue that often divides tea lovers. □



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NFL reaches 'major milestone' with record 9 minority head coaches in place for the 2024 season

By **STEVE REED**
AP Sports Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — The National Football League has urged teams for years to hire more minority head coaches.

That mission finally seems to be paying off.

Four minority head coaches have been hired this year, including Atlanta's Raheem Morris, New England's Jerod Mayo, Las Vegas' Antonio Pierce and Carolina's Dave Canales, bringing the number of coaches of color entering the 2024 season to nine, the most in league history. Seattle and Washington have yet to fill their vacancies.

Dr. Richard Lapchick, founder of The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport, called it a "major milestone" for the NFL.

"The league has been struggling to raise the percentage of head coaches of color, particularly Black head coaches," Lapchick told The Associated Press. "The NFL has worked hard to put programs in place to make this happen and the rewards have finally come home." The NFL originally created the Rooney Rule in 2003 to promote the number of minority head coaches (and later general

managers and executives) by requiring teams to interview at least one person of color before making a hire. The league further expanded the rule in 2020, incentivizing teams to hire minority assistant coaches by awarding compensatory draft picks if they lose a minority coach or top football executive to another team. NFL rules stipulate teams receive third-round selections in each of the next two drafts or each of the next three drafts if two minority employees are hired by another team providing the candidates were with the team for at least two years. So, while the Rams will receive two third-rounders for losing Morris to the Falcons, the Buccaneers will not get any since Canales was only with the organization for one season.

"I'm very pleased at what is happening around the league," said Ron Rivera, a former head coach in Carolina and Washington who is Hispanic. "I think when you have to put incentives into place to hire minorities, it probably tells you that something needs to change. But for me, this is really about making sure there are opportunities for minorities, and I think when



Pittsburgh Steelers head coach Mike Tomlin holds his season-ending meeting with reporters at the NFL football team's practice facility in Pittsburgh, Thursday, Jan. 18, 2024.

Associated Press

you open your pool of candidates to give you more to draw from, it helps you find the best person, whoever that is."

Rivera interviewed eight times for head coaching jobs with various teams before landing his first gig in Carolina in 2011. He said at times he felt like he was a "token" minority candidate, which was frustrating. Eventually, he sensed teams were truly interested in hiring him and that he became better in interviews as time went on.

"When I finally realized there was real interest, that was a pretty cool feeling," Rivera said.

There is still work to be done to achieve equality.

According to the institute's 2023 racial and gender report, two-thirds of the league (66.7%) consists of players who are minorities, with 53.5% being Black. Those percentages don't reflect the percentage of minority and Black head coaches.

But progress is being made. There are six Black head coaches entering 2024: Morris, Mayo, Pierce, Pittsburgh's Mike Tomlin, Tampa Bay's Todd Bowles and Houston's DeMeco Ryans, which doubles the number from the 2023 season. The other minority coaches are

Canales, who is Mexican American, Miami's multi-racial Mike McDaniel and Robert Saleh of the New York Jets, who is Lebanese. Rivera believes the success of existing minority head coaches in the 2023 season "absolutely" impacted the number of minority hires this year. Bowles, Ryans, Tomlin and McDaniel all led their teams to the playoffs.

Seahawks quarterback Geno Smith, who is Black, was asked if it is encouraging to hear about the hiring of more minority head coaches, such as his former quarterbacks coach Canales. He answered with a resounding no.

"It's 2024 and we are talking about minorities," Smith said. "So, it's not encouraging. I think we have to get away from that talk and let people be people. But that's another topic right there."

Rivera echoed that sentiment.

"What is happening is it is becoming more mainstream," Rivera said of the increasing number of minority hires. "There are enough good coaches now where we can start saying, 'Hey, let's just call everybody a head coach, not necessarily minority head coach.'" □



Austria's Stephanie Venier celebrates at the finish area of an alpine ski, women's World Cup downhill race, in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, Friday, Jan. 26, 2024.

Associated Press

By **ANDREW DAMPF**
AP Sports Writer

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy (AP) — Stephanie Venier held her nerve to win a World Cup downhill after Mikaela Shiffrin and other skiers crashed on Friday on

the course marked for the 2026 Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics.

Shiffrin crashed into the safety nets after losing control while landing a jump on the upper portion of the course. She was helped

Austrian skier Venier wins Cortina downhill after Shiffrin among racers who crashed

off the course with her left boot raised off the snow.

After Shiffrin and fellow former overall champion Federica Brignone went down, as well as Olympic champion Corinne Suter, Venier was able to deal with the challenging terrain on the Olympia delle Tofane course.

Venier finished 0.39 seconds ahead of Lara Gut-Behrami and 0.71 ahead of three skiers who tied for third: Valerie Grenier, Christina Ager and home favorite Sofia Goggia — creating a rare five-person podium.

"I saw all the crashes on the top," Venier said. "But I think I managed it, and it was a good run, and my technician did a really good job. My skis were really fast today."

Venier's second career World Cup win came five years after a downhill win in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany.

No women on the once dominant Austrian team had won a downhill since December 2019 through Nicole Schmidhofer at Lake Louise, Alberta.

Shiffrin's arms were flailing

as she landed in a patch of soft snow. The American, who has a record 95 World Cup wins, then slammed into the net at high speed and rebounded back onto the snow. Medics tended to Shiffrin immediately.

Shiffrin's team said she suffered a left leg injury and was taken by ambulance to the clinic in Cortina.

Brignone crashed shortly after the race resumed following a delay because of Shiffrin's fall. But Brignone got right up and proceeded to ski down. She was unhurt. □

Sinner ends 10-time champion Novak Djokovic's Australian Open streak, faces Medvedev for the title

By JOHN PYE
AP Sports Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)

— Jannik Sinner ended one of Novak Djokovic's perfect streaks in an Australian Open upset and then got to relax while Daniil Medvedev rallied from two sets down to beat Alexander Zverev after midnight to secure the other place in the final.

Just about everything went the self-described tennis fan's way in the semifinals Friday.

The 22-year-old Italian broke Djokovic's serve twice in each of the first two sets in a surprisingly lopsided 6-1, 6-2, 6-7 (6), 6-3 victory that ended the 10-time champion's unbeaten streak in Australian Open semifinals.

Djokovic had won 33 consecutive matches at Melbourne Park since 2018, and never lost here after reaching the final four.

Almost an hour after saving a match point, that phenomenal sequence was over. Sinner converted his second match point to complete a third win in four head-to-heads since losing to Djokovic in last year's Wimbledon semifinals.

"I learned a lot from that," he said, noting the turning point in their rivalry. Sinner won two of the next three



Jannik Sinner of Italy celebrates after defeating Novak Djokovic of Serbia in their semifinal at the Australian Open tennis championships at Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia, Friday, Jan. 26, 2024.

all in November at the ATP Finals in Turin and in the Davis Cup semifinals.

"It gives you a better feeling when you know that you can beat one player," he said. "The confidence from the end of last year has for sure kept the belief." Third-seeded Medvedev appeared down and out after two sets, and was two points from losing in the fourth, but he rallied to beat Zverev 5-7, 3-6, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5), 6-3 after 4 hours, 18 minutes.

"I was a little bit lost, but during the third set I started saying 'If I lose this match, I just want to be proud of myself,'" said Medvedev, who has lost two finals in Australia, including the 2022 decider from two sets up against Rafael Nadal. "I'm proud of myself." Medvedev's shanked chip forehand service return that just dropped over the net to earn a set point in the fourth-set tiebreaker clearly frustrated Zverev. "Tough luck for him, for

sure, in this point," Medvedev said. "Managed to make an ace after, but that's what tennis is about." Five games later, Zverev got a warning for a code violation for smacking the net just before another service break. "It's more disappointing that at 5-4 in the tiebreak I didn't serve it out," he said. "The 5-all point was just purely unlucky." Zverev's run drew attention on and off the court after it emerged as the tourna-

ment started that a German court set a trial date in May over an assault allegation dating to 2020. The Olympic gold medalist has denied the accusations since last July when details of the case became public.

He said it wasn't a distraction. Zverev got within a couple of swings of the racket of making a second Grand Slam final, extra disappointing after he blew a two-set lead to lose the 2020 U.S. Open final to Dominic Thiem.

Instead it will be 2021 U.S. Open winner Medvedev contending for a second major title in his sixth final. His run here included a grueling second-round win that finished at almost 4 in the morning. It makes Medvedev the first player since Pete Sampras in 1995 to register two comebacks from 2-0 down on the way to an Australian Open final. Sinner will be the youngest player to contest the men's final in Australia since 24-time major winner Djokovic took his first here in 2008.

"He's deservedly in the finals. He outplayed me completely," Djokovic said. "Look, I was shocked with my level in a bad way. There was not much I was doing right in the first two sets." □

Associated Press



Arcangelo, with jockey Javier Castellano, crosses the finish line to win the Belmont Stakes horse race, Saturday, June 10, 2023, at Belmont Park in Elmont, N.Y.

Associated Press

Cody's Wish wins Eclipse Awards as horse of the year and older dirt male

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Cody's Wish was named horse of the year at the 53rd annual Eclipse Awards and also earned older dirt male honors Thursday night. Belmont Stakes and Travers winner Arcangelo won as the nation's top 3-year-old male. Hall of Famer Bill Mott, who oversaw Cody's Wish, was honored as top trainer. Irad Ortiz Jr. took top jockey and Axel Concepcion won as apprentice rider. Godolphin won awards as top owner and breeder.

Cody's Wish was named for Kentucky teenager Cody Dorman, who watched his namesake win the Breeders' Cup Dirt Mile at Santa Anita in November and died a day later. Dorman was born with a rare genetic disorder, and the effects included delayed growth and development. Goodnight Olive was named female sprinter after successfully defending her title in the Breeders' Cup Filly & Mare Sprint. Other winners were: Breed-

ers' Cup Juvenile champion Fierceness as 2-year-old male; Just F Y I as 2-year-old filly; Pretty Mischievous as 3-year-old filly; Idiomatic as older dirt female; Elite Power as male sprinter; Up to the Mark as male turf horse; Britain-bred Inspiral as female turf horse; and Ireland-bred Merry Maker as steeplechase horse. The awards are voted on by the National Thoroughbred Racing Association, Daily Racing Form and the National Turf Writers and Broadcasters. □

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